



STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting. The State Soil Conservation Committee met on August 30, 2016, in Des Moines. The following items were discussed:

- Vince Sitzmann, Field Services Bureau, discussed staffing changes and also updated the Committee on summer activities that included staffing the State Fair, working on summer construction projects, and developing a pilot project for a reverse auction. The reverse auction was required in [HF 2454](#) (FY 2017 Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Act).
- Jake Hansen, Water Resource Bureau, discussed the funding for the [Iowa Learning Farm](#) that has been partially funded by the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (DALs) with moneys from the Environment First Fund federal 319 Grant Program in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR will no longer be able to fund it, as the 319 Grant Program has been reduced due to sequestration budget actions. A meeting will be held in September to discuss future funding options.
- Hansen also discussed closure of agriculture drainage wells. Currently, there are 35 wells that are open and registered with the DNR. The legislature appropriated \$1.92 million for FY 2015 and FY 2016, and these funds will close 17 wells. The DALs estimated that all wells could be closed by FY 2021 with continued funding.
- Susan Kozak, Mines and Minerals Bureau, provided an update on active abandoned mines projects. This included seven projects that are in the construction phase and three in the design phase.
- Jim Gillespie, Director of the Soil Conservation Division, reported that Water Quality Initiative funding for statewide practices has been obligated over 3.8 million acres. This includes 850 first-time participants and 1,000 prior participants. The practices that are available for this funding include cover crops, no till, strip till, and [N inhibitor when applying fertilizer](#).
- Gillespie also reported there are 45 projects that have been funded by the Water Quality Initiative, including 16 targeted watershed projects, seven innovative practices, and 22 urban water quality practices.
- Gillespie also discussed the proposed budget request of \$61.7 million for FY 2018 that includes:
 - Soil Conservation Administration - \$7.5 million.
 - Water Quality Initiative - \$30.0 million.
 - Soil Conservation Cost Share - \$10.0 million.
 - Agriculture Drainage Wells - \$4.6 million.
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program - \$2.5 million.
 - Conservation Reserve Program - \$2.0 million.
 - Farm Demonstration Program - \$650,000.
 - Watershed Protection Fund - \$2.7 million.
 - Urban Conservation - \$1.1 million
 - Loess Hills - \$600,000.
- There was a discussion about the annual State Committee meeting and tour for 2017 that is usually held in June. As the National Association of Conservation Districts will be holding their annual meeting in Des Moines during July 2017, members discussed the possibility of canceling the State Committee Meeting and tour for 2017. A final decision was not made.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be held on October 6. The meeting will either be a teleconference meeting or will be held in Des Moines. Members will be notified later in the month.

STAFF CONTACT: Deb Kozel (515-281-6767) deb.kozel@legis.iowa.gov